SERMON
PREACHED
BEFORE THE
COVRT
AT
Christchurch Chappel
IN
OXFORD.

BY
ROBERT SOUTH, D.D.
Public Orator to the University of *Oxford*, and Chaplain to the Lord High Chancellor of *ENGLAND*.

OXFORD,
Printed by *W. H.* for *William Nott*, and are to be sold by *Richard Davis*, 1665.

(4). 39 p.

IMPRIMATUR

ROBERTUS SAY,

Vice-Cancellarius Oxon.

To the Right Honourable

EDVVARD

Earle of *CLARENDON*,

Lord High Chancellor of *England*, and Chancellor of the Universitty of *Oxon.* and one of *His Majesties* most Honourable Privy Couucil.

My Lord,

THough to prefix ſo great a Name to ſo mean a Piece, ſeems like enlarging the Entrance of an houſe, that affords no Reception: yet, ſince there is nothing can warrant the Publication of it, but what can alſo Command it; the Work muſt think of no other Patronage, then the ſame that adorns, and protects its Author. Some indeed vouch great Names, becauſe they think they deſerve, but I, becauſe I need ſuch: and had I not more occaſion then many others, to ſee and converſe with, your Lordſhips Candour and proneſs to pardon, there is none had greater cauſe to dread your Judgment; and thereby in ſome part I venture to commend my own. For all know, who know your Lordſhip, that in a Nobler reſpect, than either that of Government, or Patronage, you repreſent and Head the beſt of Univerſities: and have Travelled over too many Nations, and Authors, to encourage any one that underſtands himſelf, to appear an Author in your Hands: who ſeldome read any Books to inform your ſelf, but onely to countenance and credit them. But, my Lord, what is here Publiſhed, pretends no In-

ſtruction, but only Homage; while it teaches many of the World, it only deſcribes your Lordſhip; Who have made the ways of Labour and Vertue, of doing, and doing Good, your Buſineſs and your Recreation, your Meat and your Drink, and, I may add alſo, your Sleep. My Lord, the Subject here treated of, is of that Nature, that it would ſeem but a Chimæra, and a bold Paradox, did it not in the very Front carry an Inſtance to exemplifie it; & ſo by the Dedication convince the World, that the Diſcourſe it ſelf was not impracticable. For ſuch ever was, and is, and will be the Temper of the generality of mankind, that, while I ſend men for Pleaſure, to Religion, I cannot but expect, that they will look upon me, as only having a mind to be pleaſant with them my ſelf: nor are men to be Worded into new Tempers, or Conſtitutions: and he that thinks, that any one can perſwade, but He that made the World, will find that he does not well underſtand it.

My Lord, I have obeyed your Command, for ſuch muſt I account your Deſire; and thereby Deſign, not ſo much the Publication of my Sermon, as of my Obedience: for, next to the Supream Pleaſure deſcribed in the enſuing Diſcourſe, I enjoy none greater, then in having any opportunity to declare my ſelf,

Your Lordſhips very Humble Servant,
and Obliged Chaplain,
Robert South.

A SERMON PREACHED AT COURT, &c.

PRO-VERBS 3. 17.

Her Wayes are Wayes of Pleaſantneſs.

THE Text relating to ſomething going before, muſt carry our Eye back to the 13 *verſe*, where we ſhall find, that the thing, of which theſe words are affirmed, is Wiſdome: A Name by which the Spirit of God was here pleaſed to expreſs to us Religion, and thereby to tell the

world, what before it was not aware of, and perhaps will not yet believe, that those two great things that so engross the desires and designes of both the Nobler and Ignobler sort of mankind, are to be found in Religion; namely, *Wisdom* and *Pleasure*; and that the former is the direct way to the latter, as Religion is to Both.

That Pleasure is mans chiefest good, (because indeed it is the perception of Good that is properly pleasure) is an assertion most certainly true, though under the common acceptance of it, not only false, but odious: for according to this, pleasure and sensuality pass for terms equivalent; and therefore, he that takes it in this sence, alters the Subject of the discourse. Sensuality is indeed a part, or rather one kind of pleasure, such an one as it is. For Pleasure in general, is the consequent apprehension of a suitable Object, suitably applied to a rightly disposed faculty; and so must be conversant, both about the faculties of the Body, and of the Soul respectively; as being the result of the fruitions belonging to Both.

Now amongst those many Arguments, used to press upon men the exercise of Religion, I know

know none that are like to be ſo ſucceſsful, as thoſe that anſwer, and remove the prejudices that generally poſſeſs, and barr up the Hearts of men againſt it: amongſt which, there is none ſo prevalent in Truth, though ſo little owned in Pretence, as that it is an Enemy to mens pleaſures, that it bereaves them of all the ſweets of Converſe, dooms them to an abſurd and perpetual Melancholy, deſigning to make the world nothing elſe but a great Monaſtery. With which notion of Religion, Nature and Reaſon ſeems to have great cauſe to be diſſatisfied. For ſince God never Created any faculty, either in Soul or Body, but withal prepared for it a ſutable object, and that in order to its gratification; can we think that Religion was deſigned onely for a Contradiction to Nature? and with the greateſt and moſt irrational Tyranny in the World to tantalize, and tie men up from enjoyment, in the midſt of all the opportunities of enjoyment? to place men with the furious affections of hunger, and thirſt in the very bottome of Plenty; and then to tell them that the envy of Providence has ſealed up every thing that is *ſutable* under the Character of *Unlawful?* For certainly, firſt

to frame appetites fit to receive pleasure, and then to interdict them with a *Touch not*, *taste not*, can be nothing else, then onely to give them occasion to devour, and prey upon themselves; and so to keep men under the perpetual Torment of an unsatisfied Desire: a thing hugely contrary to the natural felicity of the Creature, and consequently to the wisdom, and goodness of the great Creator.

He therefore that would perswade men to Religion, both with Art and efficacy, must found the perswasion of it upon this, that it interferes not with any rational pleasure, that it bids no body quit the enjoiment of any one thing that his Reason can prove to him, ought to be enjoyed. 'Tis confessed, when through the cross circumstances of a mans temper or condition, the Enjoyment of a pleasure would certainly expose him to a greater inconvenience, then Religion bids him quit it; that is, it bids him prefer the endurance of a lesser evil before a greater, and Nature it self does no less. Religion therefore intrenches upon none of our Priviledges, invades none of our Pleasures; it may indeed sometimes command us to *change*, but never totally to *abjure* them.

But

But it is easily foreseen, that this Discourse will in the very beginning of it be encountred by an Argument from Experience, and therefore not more obvious than strong; namely, that it cannot but be the greatest trouble in the world for a man thus (as it were) even to shake off himself, and to defie his Nature, by a perpetual thwarting of his innate Appetites and Desires; which yet is absolutely necessary to a severe and impartial prosecution of a Course of Piety: nay, and we have this asserted also, by the Verdict of Christ himself, who still makes the Disciplines of self-denial and the Cross, those terrible blows to flesh and blood, the indispensable requisites to the being of his Disciples. All which being so, would not he that should be so hardy as to attempt to perswade men to Piety from the pleasures of it, be lyable to that invective taunt from all mankind, that the Israelites gave to *Moses*; *Wilt thou put out the eyes of this People?* Wilt thou perswade us out of our first Notions? Wilt thou demonstrate, that there is any delight in a Cross, any Comfort in Violent abridgments, and which is the greatest Paradox of all, that the highest Pleasure is to abstain from it?

For anſwer to which, it muſt be confeſt, that all Arguments whatſoever againſt Experience are fallacious; and therefore in order to the Clearing of the Aſſertion lay'd down, I ſhall premiſe theſe two Conſiderations.

1. That Pleaſure is in the Nature of it a Relative thing, and ſo imports a peculiar Relation and Correſpondence to the State and condition of the Perſon to whom it is a Pleaſure. For as thoſe who Diſcourſe of Atoms affirm that there are Atoms of all forms, ſome round, ſome triangular, ſome ſquare, and the like; all which are continually in motion, and never ſettle till they fall into a fit circumſcription or place of the ſame figure: So there are the like great diverſities of Minds and Objects; whence it is, that this Object ſtriking upon a mind thus or thus diſpoſed, flyes off, and rebounds without making any impreſſion; but the ſame luckily hapning upon another of a Diſpoſition as it were framed for it, is preſently catcht at, and greedily claſped into the neareſt Unions and Embraces.

2. The other thing to be conſidered, is this, That the Eſtate of all men by Nature is more or leſs different from that eſtate, into which, the

the ſame perſons do, or may paſs by the exerciſe of that which the Philoſophers called Virtue, and into which men are much more effectually and ſublimely tranſlated by that which we call Grace; that is, by the ſupernatural overpowring operation of Gods Spirit. The difference of which two eſtates conſiſts in this; that in the former the ſenſitive appetites rule and domineer; in the latter the Supream faculty of the Soul, called Reaſon, ſways the Scepter, and acts the whole man above the irregular demands of Appetite and Affection.

That the diſtinction between theſe two is not a meer figment, framed only to ſerve an Hypotheſis in Divinity; and that there is no man but is really under one, before he is under the other, I ſhall prove, by ſhewing a Reaſon why it is ſo, or rather indeed why it cannot but be ſo. And it is this: Becauſe every man in the beginning of his life, for ſeveral years is capable only of exerciſing his ſenſitive faculties and deſires, the uſe of Reaſon not ſhewing it ſelf till about the Seventh Year of his Age, and then at length but (as it were) dawning in very imperfect Eſſays and Diſcoveries. Now it being

ing moſt undeniably evident that every Faculty and Power grows ſtronger and ſtronger by exercise; is it any wonder at all, when a man for the ſpace of his firſt ſix years, and thoſe the years of ductility and impreſſion, has been wholly ruled by the propenſions of ſence, at that age very eager and impetuous; that then after all, his Reaſon begining to exert and put forth it ſelf, finds the man prepoſſeſs'd and under another power: ſo that it has much adoe by many little ſteps, and gradual conqueſts, to recover its prerogative from the uſurpations of appetite, and ſo to ſubject the whole man to its Dictates: the difficulty of which is not conquered by ſome men all their Dayes. And this is one true ground of the Difference between a ſtate of Nature, and a ſtate of Grace, which ſome are pleaſed to ſcoff at in Divinity, who think that they confute all that they laugh at, not knowing that it may be ſolidly evinced by meer Reaſon and Philoſophy.

Theſe two conſiderations being premiſed, namely, That Pleaſure implyes a proportion and agreement to the reſpective States and Conditions of men; and that the ſtate of men by Nature is vaſtly different from that eſtate into

into which Grace or Vertue tranſplants them; all that Objection levelled againſt the foregoing Aſſertion is very eaſily reſolveable.

For there is no doubt, but a man, while he reſignes himſelf up to the Bruitiſh guidance of ſence and appetite, has no reliſh at all for the Spiritual, refined delights of a Soul Clarifyed by Grace and Vertue. The pleaſures of an Angel can never be the pleaſures of a Hogg. But this is the thing that we contend for; that a man having once advanced himſelf to a ſtate of Superiority over the Control of his inferior Appetites, finds an infinitely more ſolid and ſublime pleaſure in the Delights proper to his Reaſon, then the ſame perſon, had ever conveyed to him by the bare miniſtry of his Senſes. His taſt is abſolutely changed, and therefore that which pleaſed him formerly, becomes flat and inſipid, to his Appetite now grown more Maſculine and ſevere. For as age and maturity paſſes a real and a marvellous Change upon the Dyet and recreations of the ſame perſon; ſo that no man at the Years and Vigour of Thirty, is either fond of Sugerplums or Rattles: In like manner, when Reaſon, by the aſſiſtance of Grace, has prevailed

over, and outgrown the encroachments of Sence, the delights of Senſuality are to ſuch an one but as an Hobby-horſe would be to a Councellour of State; or as taſtleſs, as a bundle of Hay to an Hungry Lyon. Every alteration of a mans Condition infallibly inferrs an alteration of his Pleaſures.

The Athenians laught the Phyſiognomiſt to Scorn, who pretending to read mens minds in their foreheads, deſcribed *Socrates* for a crabbed, luſtful, proud, ill-natured Perſon; they knowing how directly contrary he was to that Dirty Character. But *Socrates* bid them forbear laughing at the man; for that he had given them a moſt exact acconnt of his nature; but what they ſaw in him ſo contrary at the preſent, was from the conqueſt that he had got over his Natural diſpoſition by Philoſophy. And now let any one conſider, whether that *Anger*, that *Revenge*, that *Wantonneſs* and *Ambition*, that were the proper pleaſures of *Socrates*, under his Natural temper of *crabbed*, *luſtful*, and *Proud*, could have at all affected or enamour'd the mind of the ſame *Socrates*, made gentle, chaſt and humble by Philoſophy.

Ariſtotle ſays, that were it Poſſible to put a Young

Young mans eye into an Old mans head, he would ſee as plainly and cleerly as the other; ſo could we infuſe the inclinations and principles of a Vertuous perſon into him that proſecutes his debauches with the greateſt Keeneſs of deſire, and ſence of Delight, he would loath and reject them as heartily, as he now purſues them. *Diogenes* being asked at a Feaſt, why he did not continue eating as the reſt did, anſwered him that asked him with another queſtion, Pray why do you eat? Why ſaies he, for my pleaſure; why ſo, ſaies *Diogenes*, do I abſtain for my Pleaſure; and therefore the vain, the Vitious and Luxurious perſon argues at an high rate of inconſequence, when he makes his particular deſires, the general meaſure of other mens delights. But the caſe is ſo plain, that I ſhall not upbraid any mans underſtanding by endeavouring to give it any farther Illuſtration.

But ſtill, after all, I muſt not deny that the change and paſſage from a ſtate of Nature, to a ſtate of Vertue, is laborious, and conſequently irkſome and unpleaſant: and to this it is, that all the forementioned expreſſions of our Saviour do allude. But ſurely the

baſeneſs of one condition, and the generous excellency of the other is a ſufficient Argument to induce any one to a change. For as no man would think it a deſireable thing, to preſerve the Itch upon himſelf, only for the Pleaſure of Scratching, that attends that loathſome diſtemper; ſo neither can any man, that would be faithful to his Reaſon, yield his Ear to be bored through by his domineering appetites, and ſo chooſe to ſerve them for ever, only for thoſe poor, thin gratifications of ſenſuality that they are able to reward him with. The aſcent up the hill is hard and tedious, but the ſerenity and fair proſpect at the Top, is ſufficient to incite the Labourer of undertaking it, and to reward it being undertook. But the difference of theſe two conditions of men, as the foundation of their different pleaſures, being thus made out; to preſs men with arguments to paſs from one to the other, is not directly in the way, or deſign of this Diſcourſe.

Yet before I come to declare poſitively the pleaſures that are to be found in the *wayes* of Religion: one of the grand duties of which is ſtated upon Repentance; a thing expreſſed to us by the grim names of Mortification, Crucifiction,

cifixion, and the like: and that I may not proceed onely upon abſolute Negations, without ſome Conceſſions; we will ſee, whether this ſo harſh, diſmal, and affrighting duty of Repentance is ſo entirely Gall, as to admit of no mixture, no allay of ſweetneſs, to reconcile it to the Apprehenſions of Reaſon and Nature.

Now Repentance conſiſts properly of two things,

1. Sorrow for Sin.
2. Change of Life.

A word briefly of them both.

1. And firſt for *Sorrow for Sin:* Uſually, the ſting of Sorrow is this, that it neither removes nor alters the thing we ſorrow for; and ſo is but a kind of reproach to our Reaſon, which will be ſure to accoſt us with this Dilemma. Either the thing, we ſorrow for, is to be remedied, or it is not: If it is, why then do we ſpend the time in mourning, which ſhould be ſpent in an active applying of Remedies? but if it is not; then is our Sorrow Vain and Superfluous, as tending to no real Effect. For no man can weep his Father or his Friend out of the Grave, or mourn himſelf out of a Bankrapt condition. But this Spi-

ritual

ritual Sorrow is effectual to one of the greateſt and higheſt Purpoſes, that mankind can be Concerned in. It is a means to avert an impendent wrath; to diſarme an offended Omnipotence; and even to fetch a Soul out of the very jawes of Hell. So that the End and Conſequence of this ſorrow, ſweetens the ſorrow it ſelf: and as *Solomon* ſayes, *In the midſt of laughter, the heart is ſorrowful*; ſo in the midſt of ſorrow here, the heart may rejoyce: for while it mourns, it reads, That *thoſe that mourn ſhall be comforted*; and ſo while the Penitent weeps with one Eye, he views his Deliverance with the other. But then for the External Expreſſions, and vent of Sorrow; we know that there is a certain pleaſure in weeping; it is the Diſcharge of a big and a ſwelling grief, of a full and a ſtrangling diſcontent: and therefore he that never had ſuch a burden upon his heart, as to give him opportunity thus to eaſe it, has one pleaſure in this *World*, yet to Come.

2. As for the other part of Repentance, which is change of life; this indeed may be troubleſome in the Entrance; but it is but the firſt bold onſet, the firſt reſolute Violence and invaſion upon a vitious habit, that is ſo ſharp and

and afflicting. Every impreſſion of the Lancet Cuts, but it is the firſt onely that Smarts. Beſides, it is an Argument hugely unreaſonable, to plead the Paine of paſſing *from* a Vitious Eſtate, unleſs it were proved, that there was none in the continuance *under* it: But ſurely, when we read of the *Service*, the *Bondage*, and the *Captivity* of *Sinners*, we are not entertain'd only with the Air of Words, and Metaphors; and inſtead of Truth, put off with Similitudes. Let him that ſayes it is a trouble to refrain from a Debauch, convince us, that it is not a greater to undergoe one: and that the Confeſſor did not impoſe a ſhrewd Pennance upon the Drunken man, by bidding him go and be drunk again: and that liſping, raging, redneſs of Eyes, and what is not fit to be named in ſuch an Audience, is not more toilſome, then to be clean, and quiet, and diſcreet, and reſpected for being ſo. All the trouble that is in it, is the trouble of being ſound, being cured, and being recovered. But if there be great arguments for Health, then certainly, there are the ſame for the obtaining of it: and ſo keeping a due proportion between Spirituals and Temporals, we neither have, nor pretend to greater Arguments for Repentance. Having

Having thus now, cleared off all, that by way of Objection can lie against the Truth asserted, by showing the proper Qualifications of the Subject, to whom only the *wayes of Wisdom*, can be *wayes of Pleasantness*; for the further prosecution of the matter in hand, I shall show what are those properties that so peculiarly set off, and enhance the Excellency of this Pleasure.

1. The first is, That it is the proper pleasure of that part of man, which is the largest and most comprehensive of Pleasure, and that is his mind: a substance of a boundless comprehension. The mind of man is an Image, not only of Gods Spirituality, but of his Infinity. It is not like any of the Sences, limited to this or that kind of object: as the sight intermedles not with that which affects the smell; but with an universal superintendence, it arbitrates upon, and takes them in, all. It is (as I may so say) an Ocean, into which all the little Rivolets of Sensation, both External and Internal, discharge themselves. It is framed by God to receive all and more then Nature can afford it; and so to be its own motive to seek for something above Nature. Now this is that part of man,

to

to which the Pleaſures of Religion properly belong: and that in a double reſpect.

1. In reference to Speculation, as it ſuſteins the name of Underſtanding.

2. In reference to Practice, as it ſuſteins the name of Conſcience.

1. And firſt for Speculation: the pleaſures of which have been ſometimes ſo great, ſo intenſe, ſo ingroſſing of all the Powers of the Soul, that there has been no room left for any other Pleaſure. It has ſo called together all the Spirits to that one Work, that there has bin no ſupply to carry on the Inferior operations of Nature. Contemplation feels no Hunger, nor is ſenſible of any Thirſt, but of that after knowledge. How frequent and exalted a Pleaſure did *David* find from his Meditation in the Divine Law! *all the day long* it was the Theam of his Thoughts. The affairs of State, the government of his Kingdom, might indeed *employ*, but it was this only that *refreſh'd* his mind.

How ſhort of this are the delights of the Epicure! how vaſtly diſproportionate are the Pleaſures of the Eating, and of the Thinking man! indeed as different, as the ſilence of an

Archimedes in the ſtudy of a Problem, and the ſtillneſs of a Sow at her waſh. Nothing is comparable to the pleaſure of an Active, and a prevailing thought: a thought prevailing over the difficulty and obſcurity of the Object, and refreſhing the Soul with new diſcoveries, and images of things; and thereby extending the Bounds of Apprehenſion, and (as it were) enlarging the Territories of Reaſon.

Now this pleaſure of the Speculation of Divine things, is advanced upon a double Account.

1. The Greatneſs.
2. The newneſs of the Object.

1. And firſt for the greatneſs of it. It is no leſs then the great God himſelf, and that both in his Nature, and his Works. For the Eye of Reaſon, like that of the Eagle, directs it ſelf chiefly to the Sun, to a glory that neither admits of a Superior, nor an Equal. Religion carries the Soul to the ſtudy of every Divine Attribute.

It poſes it with the amazing thoughts of Omnipotence; of a Power able to fetch up ſuch a Glorious Fabrick, as this of the world,

out

out of the Abyſs of Vanity and Nothing, and able to through it back into the ſame Original Nothing again. It drowns us in the ſpeculation of the Divine Omniſcience; that can maintain a ſteady infallible comprehenſion of all Events in themſelves Contingent and Accidental; and certainly know that, which does not certainly exiſt. It confounds the greateſt ſubtilties of Speculation, with the Riddles of Gods Omnipreſence; that can ſpread a ſingle Individual ſubſtance through all ſpaces; and yet without any commenſuration of parts *to* any, or circumſcription *within* any, though totally in every one. And then for his Eternity; which nonpluſſes the Strongeſt and the Cleareſt Conception, to comprehend how one ſingle Act of Duration, ſhould meaſure all Periods and Portions of time without any of the diſtinguiſhing parts of Succeſſion. Likewiſe for his Juſtice; which ſhall prey upon the ſinner for ever, ſatisfying it ſelf by a perpetual Miracle, rendring the Creature immortal in the midſt of the flames; alwayes conſuming, but never conſumed. With the like wonders we may entertain our Speculations from his Mercy; his Beloved, his Triumphant Attribute; an Attribute, if it

were possible, something more then Infinite; for even his Justice is so, and his Mercy transcends that. Lastly, we may contemplate upon his supernatural, astonishing works; particularly in the Resurrection, and reparation of the same numerical Body, by a reunion of all the scattered Parts, to be at length disposed of into an estate of Eternal woe or Bliss; as also the greatness & strangeness of the Beatifick Vision; how a created Eye should be so fortifyed, as to bear all those Gloryes that stream from the fountain of uncreated Light; the meanest expression of which Light, is, that it is unexpressible. Now what great and high Objects are these for a Rational Contemplation to busy it self upon! Heights that scorn the reach of our Prospect; and Depths in which the tallest Reason will never touch the Bottom: yet surely the pleasure arising from thence is Great and Noble; for as much, as they afford perpetual matter and imployment to the inquisitiveness of Humane Reason; and so are large enough, for it to take its full scope and range in. Which when it has suck'd and dreined the utmost of any Object, naturally layes it aside, and neglects it as a dry and an Empty thing.

2. As

2. As the things belonging to Religion entertain our Speculation with great Objects, ſo they entertain it alſo with new. And novelty we know is the great parent of pleaſure; upon which account it is, that men are ſo much pleaſed with Variety, and Variety is nothing elſe but a continued Novelty. The Athenians, who were the profeſt and moſt diligent Improvers of their Reaſon, made it their whole buſineſs *to hear or to tell ſome new thing*: For the truth is, Newneſs eſpecially in great matters, was a worthy entertainment for a ſearching mind; it was (as I may ſo ſay) an High Taſt fitt for the reliſh of an Athenian Reaſon. And thereupon the meer unheard of ſtrangeneſs of *Jeſus* and the Reſurrection, made them deſirous to hear it diſcourſed of to them again, 17. *Acts* 23. But how would it have employed their ſearching Faculties, had the Myſtery of the Trinity, and the Incarnation of the Sonn of God, and the whole Oeconomy of mans Redemption, been explained to them! For how could it ever enter into the thoughts of Reaſon, that a ſatisfaction could be paid to an Infinite Juſtice? Or, that two Natures ſo unconceivably dif-

ferent, as the Humane and Divine, could unite into one perſon? The knowledge of theſe things could derive from nothing elſe but pure Revelation, and conſequently muſt be purely *New* to the higheſt diſcourſes of meer Nature. Now that the Newneſs of an Object ſo exceedingly pleaſes and ſtrikes the mind; appears from this one conſideration; that every thing pleaſes more in expectation then fruition: and expectation ſuppoſes a thing as yet new, the hoped for diſcovery of which is the Pleaſure that entertains the expecting, and enquiring mind: Whereas Actual diſcovery (as it were) rifles and deflours the Newneſs and Freſhneſs of the object, and ſo for the moſt part makes it Cheap, Familiar and Contemptible.

It is cleer therefore, that, if there be any pleaſure to the mind from ſpeculation; and if this pleaſure of ſpeculation be advanced by the greatneſs and newneſs of the things contemplated upon; all this is to be found in the wayes of Religion.

2. In the next place, Religion is a pleaſure to the mind, as it reſpects Practice, and ſo ſuſteins the Name of Conſcience. And Conſcience undoubtedly is the great Repoſitory and Maga-

zine

zine of all thoſe pleaſures that can afford any ſolid refreſhment to the Soul. For when this is calm, and ſerene, and abſolving, then properly a man enjoys all things, and what is more, Himſelf, for that he muſt do, before he can enjoy any thing elſe. But it is only a Pious life, lead exactly by the rules of a ſevere Religion, that can authorize a mans Conſcience to ſpeak comfortably to him: It is this that muſt word the ſentence, before the Conſcience can pronounce it; and then it will do it with Majeſty and Authority; It will not whiſper, but proclaim a Jubilee to the mind. It will not drop, but pour in oile upon the wounded heart. And is there any pleaſure comparable to that which ſprings from hence! The Pleaſure of Conſcience is not only greater then all other Pleaſures, but may alſo ſerve inſtead of them: for they only pleaſe and affect the mind *in Tranſitu*, in the pittiful narrow compaſs of actual fruition; whereas that of Conſcience entertains and feeds it a long time after with durable, laſting reflections.

And thus much for the firſt ennobling property of the Pleaſure belonging to Religion, namely, that it is the pleaſure of the mind,

and

and that both, as it relates to Speculation, and is call'd the Understanding; and as it relates to Practice, and is called the Conscience.

2. The second ennobling property of it is, that it is such a pleasure as never satiates, or wearies: for it properly affects the Spirit, and a Spirit feels no wearinesse, as being priviledged from the causes of it. But can the Epicure say so of any of the pleasures that he so much dotes upon? Do they not expire, while they satisfie? and after a few minutes refreshment, determine in loathing and unquietness? How short is the Interval between a pleasure and a Burden! how undiscernable the Transition from one to the other! Pleasure dwells no longer upon the Appetite, then the necessities of Nature, which are quickly, and easily provided for; and then all that follows, is a load and an oppression. Every morsel to a satisfyed Hunger, is onely a new Labour to a tired Digestion. Every draught to him that has quencht his Thirst, is but a further quenching of Nature; a provision for Rheums and Diseases; a drowning of the quickness, and activity of the Spirits.

He that prolongs his meals, and sacrifices his

his Time, as well as his other Conveniences, to his Luxury, how quickly does he out-ſit his Pleaſure? and then how is all the following time beſtowed upon Ceremony and Surfet! till at length after a long fatigue of Eating, and Drinking, and Babling, he concludes the great work of Dineing Gentilely, and ſo makes a ſhift to riſe from Table, that he may lye down upon his Bed: Where, after he has ſlept himſelf into ſome uſe of Himſelf, by much adoe he ſtaggers to his Table again, and there acts over the ſame Bruitiſh Scene: ſo that he paſſes his whole life in a dozed Condition between ſleeping, and waking, with a kind of drowſineſs, and confuſion upon his Sences; which, what pleaſure it can be, is hard to conceive; all that is of it, dwels upon the tipp of his Tongue, and within the compaſs of his Palat; a worthy prize for a man to purchaſe with the loſs of his Time, his Reaſon, and Himſelf.

Nor is that man leſs deceived, that thinks to maintain a conſtant tenure of Pleaſure, by a continual purſuit of Sports and Recreations: For it is moſt certainly

True of all theſe things, that as they refreſh a man when he is weary, ſo they weary him when he is refreſh'd; Which is an evident Demonſtration that God never deſigned the uſe of them to be continual; by putting ſuch an emptineſs in them, as ſhould ſo quickly fail and lurch the expectation.

The moſt Voluptuous, and looſe perſon breathing, were he but tyed to follow his Hawks, and his Hounds, his Dice, and his Courtſhips every day, would find it the greateſt Torment, and Calamity that could befal him; he would flie to the *Mines* and the *Gallyes* for his Recreation, and to the Spade and the Mattock for a Diverſion from the miſery of a Continuall un-intermitted Pleaſure.

But on the contrary, the Providence of God has ſo ordered the Courſe of things, that there is no Action, whoſe uſefulneſs has made it the matter of Duty, and of a Profeſſion, but a man may bear the continual purſuit of it, without Loathing or Satiety. The ſame Shop and Trade, that employes a man in his Youth, employes him

him alſo in his Age. Every morning he riſes freſh to his Hammer and his Anvil; he paſſes the Day ſinging: Cuſtome has naturalized his Labour to him: His Shop is his Element, and he cannot with any enjoyment of himſelf live out of it. Whereas, no cuſtome can make the painfulneſs of a Debauch eaſy, or pleaſing to a man; ſince nothing can be pleaſant that is Unnatural. But now, if God has interwoven ſuch a pleaſure with the works of our ordinary Calling; how much ſuperior and more refined muſt that be, that ariſes from the ſurvey of a Pious and well governed Life! Surely, as much as Chriſtianity is nobler then a Trade.

And then, for the Conſtant freſhneſs of it; it is ſuch a pleaſure as can never cloy or overwork the mind: for, ſurely no man was ever weary of *thinking*, much leſs of thinking that he had done well or vertuouſly, that he had conquered ſuch and ſuch a Temptation, or offered Violence to any of his Exorbitant Deſires. This is a delight that grows and improves under thought and reflexion:

and while it exerciſes, does alſo endear it ſelf to the mind; at the ſame time imploying and inflaming the Meditations. All pleaſures that affect the Body, muſt needs weary, becauſe they tranſport, and all Tranſportation is a Violence; and no Violence can be laſting, but determines upon the falling of the Spirits, which are not able to keep up that height of motion, that the Pleaſure of the Senſes raiſes them to. And therefore how inevitably does an immoderate laughter end in a ſigh? which is only Natures recovering it ſelf after a force done to it. But the Religious Pleaſure of a well diſpoſed mind, moves gently, and therefore conſtantly; it does not affect by Rapture and Extaſie; but is like the pleaſure of Health, which is Still and Sober, yet Greater and Stronger, then thoſe that *call up* the Senſes, with groſſer and more affecting impreſſions. God has given no man a Body as ſtrong as his Appetiets; but has corrected the Boundleſsneſs of his Voluptuous deſires, by ſtinting his ſtrengths, and contracting his Capacities.

But to look upon thoſe pleaſures alſo, that

that have an higher object than the Body; as those that spring from honour and grandeur of Condition; yet we shall find, that even these are not so fresh and constant, but the Mind can nauseate them, and quickly feel the thinness of a popular Breath. Those that are so fond of Applause, while they pursue it, how little do they tast it when they have it! Like lightning, it only flashes upon the face and is gone, and it is well if it does not hurt the man. But for greatness of Place; though it is fit and necessary, that some persons in the world should be in love with a splendid servitude, yet certainly they must be much beholding to their own fancy, that they can be pleased at it. For he that rises up early, and goes to bed late, only to receive Addresses, to read and answer Petitions, is really as much tied and abridged in his freedom, as he that waits all that time to present one. And what pleasure can it be to be encumbred with Dependances, throng'd and surrounded with Petitioners? and those perhaps sometimes all Suitors for the same thing: whereupon all

but

but one will be ſure to depart grumbling, becauſe they miſſe of what they think their due: and even that *one* ſcarce thankful, becauſe he thinks he has no more than his due. In a word, if it is a pleaſure to be envied and ſhot at, to be maligned *ſtanding*, and to be deſpiſed *falling*, to endeavour that which is impoſſible, which is to pleaſe all, and to ſuffer for not doing it; then is it a pleaſure to be great, and to be able to diſpoſe of mens fortunes and preferments.

But further to proceed from hence, to yet an higher degree of Pleaſure, indeed the higheſt on this ſide that of Religion; which is the pleaſure of Friendſhip and Converſation. Friendſhip muſt confeſſedly be allowed, the Top, the Flower, and Crown of all Temporal enjoyments. Yet has not this alſo its flaws, and its dark ſide? For is not my Friend a man, and is not Friendſhip ſubject to the ſame Mortality and Change that men are? And in caſe a man loves, and is not loved again, does he not think that he has cauſe to hate as heartily, and ten times

times more eagerly then ever he loved? and then *to be* an Enemy, and once to *have bin* a Friend, does it not embitter the Rupture, and aggravate the Calamitie? But admitting that my Friend continues so to the end; yet in the mean time, is he all Perfection, all Vertue, and Discretion? Has he not *humours* to be endured, as well as *kindnesses* to be enjoyed? And am I sure to smell the Rose, without sometimes feeling the Thorn?

And then lastly for Company; though it may *Reprieve* a man from his Melancholy, yet it cannot secure him from his Conscience, nor from sometimes being alone! And what is all that a man enjoyes, from a weeks, a months, or a years converse, comparable to what he feels for one hour, when his Conscience shall take him aside, and rate him by himself!

In short, run over the whole Circle of all Earthly Pleasures, and I dare affirm, that had not God secured a man a solid pleasure from his own Actions, after he had rolled from one to another, and enjoyed

joyed them all, he would be forced to complaine, that either they were not indeed Pleaſures, or that Pleaſure was not Satisfaction.

3. The third ennobling Property of the Pleaſure that accrews to a man from Religion, is, that it is ſuch an one as is in no bodies power, but onely in his that has it; ſo that he that has the Propriety, may be alſo ſure of the Perpetuity. And tell me ſo of any outward enjoyment, that Mortality is capable of. We are generally at the mercy of mens Rapine, Avarice, and Violence, whether we ſhall be happy or no. For if I build my felicity upon my Eſtate or Reputation, I am happy as long as the Tyrant, or the Railer will give me leave to be ſo. But when my concernments take up no more room or compaſs, then my ſelf; then ſo long as I know where to breath, and to exiſt, I know alſo where to be happy: for I know I may be ſo in my own Breaſt, in the Court of my own Conſcience, where, if I can but prevail with my ſelf *to be* Innocent, I need bribe neither Judge nor Officer

ficer to be *pronounced* ſo. The pleaſure of the Religious man, is an eaſie and a portable pleaſure, ſuch an one as he carries about in his boſome, without alarming either the Eye or Envy of the world. A mans putting all his pleaſures into this one, is like a Travellers putting all his goods into one Jewel: the Value is the ſame, and the Convenience greater.

There is nothing that can raiſe a man to that generous abſoluteneſs of condition, as neither to cringe, to fawn, or to depend meanly; but that which gives him that happineſs within himſelf, for which men depend upon others. For ſurely I need ſalute no great mans Threſhold, ſneak to none of his Friends or Servants, to ſpeak a good word for me to my Conſcience. It is a noble, and a ſure Defiance of a great Malice, backt with a great Intereſt; which, yet can have no advantage of a man, but from his own Expectations of ſomething that is without himſelf. But if I can make my Duty my delight; if I can feaſt, and pleaſe, and careſſe my mind with the pleaſures

of worthy Speculations, or vertuous practices, let Greatneſs and Malice vex and abridge me if they can: my Pleaſures are as free as my Will; no more to be controlled then my Choice, or the unlimited range of my Thoughts and my Deſires.

Nor is this kind of Pleaſure onely out of the reach of any outward Violence; but even thoſe things alſo, that make a much cloſer impreſſion upon us, which are the irreſiſtible decayes of Nature, have yet no influence at all upon this. For when Age it ſelf, which of all things in the world, will not be baffled or defyed, ſhall begin to Arreſt, Seize, and remind us of our Mortality, by Paines, Aches, deadneſs of Limbs, and dulneſs of Sences; yet then the pleaſure of the mind, ſhall be in its full Youth, Vigour, and Freſhneſſe. A Palſie may as well ſhake an Oak, or a Feaver dry up a Fountaine, as either of them ſhake, dry up, or impair the delight of Conſcience. For it lies within, it Centers in the heart, it grows into the very ſubſtance of the Soul;

ſo

ſo that it accompanies a man to his Grave; he never out-lives it, and that for this cauſe onely, becauſe he cannot out-live himſelf.

And thus I have endeavour'd to deſcribe the Excellency of that *Pleaſure* that is to be found in the *wayes* of a *Religious Wiſdome*, by thoſe excellent properties that do attend it; which, whether they reach the Deſcription that has been given them, or no, every man may convince himſelf, by the beſt of Demonſtrations, which is his own tryal.

Now, from all this Diſcourſe, this I am ſure, is a moſt natural and direct conſequence, that if the *wayes of Religion*, are wayes of *Pleaſantneſs*; then thoſe that are not *wayes of Pleaſantneſs*, are not truly and properly *wayes of Religion*. Upon which ground, it is eaſie to ſee what judgment is to be paſſed upon all thoſe affected, uncommanded, abſurd Auſterities, ſo much prized, and exerciſed by ſome of the Romiſh Profeſſion. Pilgrimages, going barefoot, Hair-ſhirts, and Whips, with other ſuch Goſpel-Artil-

lery, are their onely helps to Devotion: Things never enjoyned, either by the Prophets under the Jewish, or by the Apostles under the Christian Oeconomy; who, yet surely, understood the proper, and the most efficacious Instruments of Piety, as well as any Confessor, or Fryar of all the Order of St. *Francis*, or any Casuist whatsoever.

It seems, that with them, a man sometimes cannot be a Penitent, unless he also turnes Vagabond, and foots it to *Jerusalem*; or wanders over this or that part of the world to visit the Shrine of such or such a pretended Saint; though perhaps in his life, ten times more ridiculous then themselves: thus, that which was *Cains* Curse, is become their Religion. He that thinks to expiate a Sin, by going barefoot, does the Pennance of a Goose; and onely makes one Folly, the Attonement of another. *Paul* indeed was Scourged and Beaten by the Jewes, but we never read that he Beat or Scourg'd himself: and if they think *that his keeping under of his Body* imports so much; they must first prove,

that

that the Body cannot be kept under by a Vertuous mind, and that the mind cannot be made Vertuous but by a Scourge; and consequently that *Thongs* and *Whipcord* are means of Grace, and things necessary to Salvation. The Truth is, if mens Religion lyes no deeper then their Skin, it is possible that they may Scourge themselves into very great Improvements.

But they will find that *Bodily exercise* touches not the Soul; and that neither Pride, nor Lust, nor Covetousness, nor any other Vice was ever Mortifyed by Corporal Disciplines: 'tis not the Back, but the Heart that must Bleed for sin: and consequently, that in this whole Course they are like men out of their way; let them Slash on never so fast, they are not at all the nearer to their Journyes end: and howsoever they deceive themselves and others, they may as well expect to bring a Cart, as a Soul to Heaven by such means. What Arguments they have to beguile poor Simple, unstable Souls with, I know not; but surely the Practical

Casuistical, that is, the Principal, Vital part of their Religion savours very little of Spirituality.

And now upon the result of all, I suppose that to exhort men to be Religious, is only in other words to exhort them to take their Pleasure. A Pleasure High, Rational, and Angelical; a Pleasure, embased with no appendant sting, no consequent Loathings, no Remorses, or bitter farewels. But such an one, as being Honey in the Mouth, never turns to Gall or Gravel in the Belly. A Pleasure made for the Soul, and the Soul for that; suitable to its Spirituality, and equal to all its Capacities. Such an one as grows fresher upon Enjoyment, and though continually Fed upon, yet is never Devoured. A Pleasure that a Man may call as properly his own, as his Soul and his Conscience; neither lyable to Accident, nor exposed to Injury. It is the fore-taste of Heaven, and the Earnest of Eternity. In a word, it is such an one, as being begun in Grace, passes into Glory, Blessedness and Immortality.

mortality, and thoſe Pleaſures *that neither Eye has ſeen, nor Ear heard, nor has it entred into the Heart of Man to Conceive.*

To which God of his Mercy vouchſafe to bring us all: to whom be rendred and aſcribed, as is moſt due, all Praiſe, Might, Majeſty, and Dominion, both now and for evermore. *Amen.*

FINIS.